

## House Republican Press Release

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### **Rep. Ruwet Says Nutrition Bill Another Unfunded Mandate on Schools**



State Rep. Anne L. Ruwet, R-65<sup>th</sup>, Torrington, says school nutrition legislation moving through the state legislature is another unfunded mandate, again telling local school districts how to address the needs of children.

Rep. Ruwet said, “The intent of the legislation is to pass a mandate on to the local school districts to regulate children’s eating, but again no funds are attached.”

“Food service directors throughout the state have expressed their concerns and have not supported the legislation,” said Rep. Ruwet. “They cannot afford to expand their budgets to meet these requirements.”

“The issue of childhood obesity is a serious one, but this is poor legislation to attack a critical need,” said Rep. Ruwet.

The legislation, SB 1309, allows schools to only offer water, milk, 100% fruit or vegetable juice, beverages with only water and fruit juice. An amendment allows high schools to sell sugar free soft drinks or “Gatorade” type drinks as ½ hour after lunch ends provided they only make up 20% of the beverages they offer.

Middle and high schools would be permitted to sell all other beverages if the sale is in connection with a school sponsored event after the regular school day or weekend and they are sold at the location of the event and not from a vending machine or school store.

The bill also requires the State Department of Education to publish a list of recommended prepackaged foods and set nutritional standards for other foods that can be the only foods offered in schools in the state. This list must be published by January 1, 2006. The school districts must implement these recommendations by August 15, 2006.

All schools are permitted to sell foods not on this list at the end of the regular school day or weekend, if this is at a school-sponsored event and the foods are not sold from a vending machine or school store. This amendment allows for any food to be sold as part of fundraising activities.